Antiques recovered from the godown of INTACH in M.P.

2805. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of unaccounted antiques were recovered sometime back from the godown of the INTACH in a restoration project at the heritage site of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any probe has been ordered into the affairs so as to find out the magnitude of such illegal transaction and the persons involved;

(d) if so, whether the result of the probe has been received; and

(e) the steps taken, both preventive and corrective, in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. 11 sculptures were recovered from the godown of INTACH's contractor in Khajuraho and was seized by the Tehsildar, Raj Nagar. These have now been kept in the Treasury of Raj Nagar which is under the Collector, Chattarpur.

(c) and (d) An enquiry has been conducted by the State Department of Archaeology, Superintendent of Police, Chattarpur and a factual report has also been received from the Superintending Archaeologist, Bhopal Circle. Subsequent to this, an on the spot inspection was conducted by the D.G., A.S.I, to verify the veracity of the conclusions. The final report is awaited.

(e) The local police at Khajuraho has been asked to maintain strict surveillance.

Encroachment near heritage sites

2806. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Garbage rules in this Monument", "Concrete doesn't see merit in heritage or court orders" and "Money can buy you heritage here" appearing in the Express Newsline, Indian Express, Delhi dated 22nd April, 2002, 8th May, 2002 and 11th August, 2002 respectively.

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the details of action taken to clear encroachments, prevent illegal sale and stop construction work in prohibited area around protected monuments and heritage sites; and